



LIFESAVING SOCIETY CANADA NATIONAL POLICY

SUBJECT: National Complaint & Certification Review Policy	
CATEGORY: Training Programs Commission	POLICY NUMBER: TBD
BYLAW: 5.3 and 5.4	DATE OF BOD APPROVAL: 09-22-2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent process and structure for addressing complaints, reviews, or issues related to member certification or conduct. It aims to protect the reputation and integrity of Lifesaving Society Canada (hereinafter LSC) by ensuring that all actions align with its standards, policies, and values.

SCOPE

The National Complaint and Certification Review Policy primarily applies to leadership roles, including instructors, examiners, and trainers responsible for delivering LSC programs. However, it may also extend to other award holders, such as lifeguards who fail to uphold or represent LSC standards.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal: An appeal conducted in line with the terms and conditions of the Appeal Policy and SOP.

Investigation: A systematic process of inquiry or examination carried out to uncover facts, gather evidence, and arrive at conclusions about an event, issue, or allegation.

Policy Statements

Complaints

1. Complaints received directly by LSC that pertain to Branch-level matters will be referred to the relevant Branch for resolution. LSC will assess if the complaint requires escalation to senior staff, the CEO, or the Board of Directors.
2. Employment-related issues are not covered under this policy.

Certification Review

3. LSC Branches will conduct the investigation, certification review and appeal, as the Branches certify the candidates.
4. LSC accepts that any member has the right to appeal a Branch decision if it is alleged to be inconsistent with Bylaws, Policies, Procedures; if it is alleged to be biased; or if it is alleged to carry an undue adverse impact. If a member requests a National appeal, the process as set out in the National Appeal Policy and Standard Operating Procedure applies.
5. Appendix A provides guidelines to assist Branches in the development of a standard operating procedure for certification reviews, or to serve as a reference in instances where a Branch has not yet established such a procedure.

EVALUATION

This policy will be evaluated as per the 5-year policy revision cycle, or as needed. Any changes must be approved by the Board of Directors.

REFERENCE

Bylaw 5.3 Authority (b)

Bylaw 5.4 Role of Canadian Society (m), (n), (o)

SOP-031 – Appeals

LSC Code of Conduct

National Training Program SOP and Policy Manual (current)

RELATED POLICIES

Harassment Policy

Appeal Policy (G-031)

All Board Approved Policies

APPROVAL HISTORY

ISSUED BY:	APPROVED BY:	BOARD APPROVAL
Policy Committee	Policy Committee	Date: 2007
REVISED BY: Training Programs	APPROVED BY:	BOARD APPROVAL
		Date: 09-22-2025

APPENDIX A

CERTIFICATION REVIEW GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Certification Review Guidelines is to support Branches in the development and implementation of a standard operating procedure for certification reviews, or to serve as a reference in instances where a Branch has not yet established such a procedure.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal: An appeal conducted in line with the terms and conditions of the Appeal Policy and SOP.

Certification Review Chair: A designated individual who oversees the certification review processes.

Investigation: A systematic process of inquiry or examination carried out to uncover facts, gather evidence, and arrive at conclusions about an event, issue, or allegation.

Investigator: A person who conducts a formal and systematic inquiry or examination to uncover facts, gather evidence, and determine the truth about a specific issue, event, or allegation.

Review Committee: A group of individuals tasked with evaluating performance against set criteria, and providing recommendations or decisions based on their findings.

STRUCTURE

LSC Branches will conduct the investigation, certification review and Branch level appeal on behalf of the LSC, as the Branches certify the candidates.

1. The Branch-level Certification Review Process can include two steps: (1) the investigation; and (2) the review process (the “Review”).
 - 1.1 The Certification Review Chair (the “Chair”) may be a senior staff member or volunteer appointed by the Branch, provided no conflict of interest exists (defined as a personal or direct professional relationship with the member in question). If a conflict is present, the next most senior, unconflicted staff member or volunteer should serve as Chair.
 - 1.2 The Chair appoints a Committee of at least two additional members, such as Branch Committee Chairs or National Trainers with relevant portfolios. Branches may involve a Board member at this stage or reserve their involvement for an appeal. The Chair should ensure no Committee member has a conflict of interest with the complaint or the individual under review.
 - 1.3 A staff member or delegate (the “Investigator”) conducts the investigation and produces a report for the Committee. The Investigator consults with the Chair to determine whether a Review is warranted. If a Review is warranted, then the Committee evaluates whether relevant certification policies, procedures, or standards were compromised, and if the Committee finds they have been compromised, then the Chair submits the Committee’s recommended sanctions to the CEO for final confirmation.

PRINCIPLES

2. The Certification Review Process should include the following principles to help guide the processes and decisions to ensure accountability and integrity in the review system:
 - **Fairness:** Ensure an unbiased and impartial approach in handling reviews and complaints (e.g. listen to all sides of the issue).

- **Transparency:** Maintain open and clear communication throughout the process.
- **Consistency:** Align decisions with established standards, policies, and past precedents.
- **Privacy:** Ensure confidentiality is maintained throughout the process to protect all parties.
- **Professional Judgment:** Apply thoughtful, deliberate decision-making with a focus on fairness and ethics.
- **Public Interest:** Act in a manner that upholds and protects public trust and the integrity of the organization.

PROCESS

3. When a complaint or issue involving a member arises, it is referred to an Investigator. Ideally, complaints should be submitted in writing and should pertain to a policy, procedure, code of conduct, or standard that has allegedly been violated.
 - Complaints are handled confidentially and can be submitted anonymously. However, anonymity may limit the depth of the investigation. Information about the complainant, including their name or correspondence, will only be disclosed if necessary to protect the Society's integrity.
4. The Investigator documents the complaint and conducts a thorough investigation.
 - The Investigator consults with individuals directly involved in the complaint.
 - Members under investigation are notified in writing (via email or registered mail) and/or by phone of the complaint, the actions being taken, their rights (including representation and parental support for minors), and the certification review process. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the member is informed.
 - If a member remains uncooperative within 30 days, the Chair may proceed with a Committee meeting in their absence.
5. In cases involving serious criminal charges or critical concerns (e.g., safety, abuse, or integrity threats), senior staff or the Chair may take immediate action, such as suspending awards or privileges, before a formal Review.
 - If criminal charges are involved, the Review may be delayed until legal proceedings conclude, unless requested earlier by the member.
 - Conviction of a serious crime may lead to revocation or decertification of awards, unless the member requests a Review within 60 days of the conviction.
6. Complaints may be resolved during the investigation phase if appropriate.
7. The Chair convenes a Committee meeting to review all documents. The accused member is provided with the documents in advance and invited to present their explanations during the Committee interview.
8. The Chair determines any necessary actions, including drafting communication letters and preparing reports for the CEO.
9. Any sanctions approved by the CEO are implemented and communicated to relevant parties. Member database files are updated by senior staff accordingly.
10. The Committee's findings and CEO-approved sanctions are submitted by the Chair to the CEO and Corporate Secretary for presentation to the Board of Directors.

SANCTIONS

LSC recognizes that individuals work long and hard to earn their awards and/or appointments and that any decision which alters or revokes that status is a serious matter. LSC also knows that deviations from expected conduct or the lowering of standards could endanger lives. Ultimately, LSC has a responsibility to protect the public interest by overseeing the quality of its programs and the character or behaviour of its volunteers, appointees and award- holders.

11. The Branch may impose the following sanctions or disciplinary actions based on the outcome of an investigation or review:

- **No action required:** it has been determined after investigation that LSC policies, procedures, code of conduct or standard in question was not compromised.
- **Written Reprimand:** may be issued by an Investigator or Chair without convening a Review. Reprimands will be written for insertion in the member's file.
- **Probation:** a corrective measure aimed at addressing deficiencies, improving behavior, or enabling ongoing assessment of the member's conduct.
- **Suspension:** a serious action to temporarily remove the member from their role as a representative of the Lifesaving Society. Suspension is designed to protect the public and the integrity of the Lifesaving Society, with reinstatement contingent upon compliance with specified conditions.
- **Revocation of Appointment or Decertification:** the most severe action, taken to safeguard the public and preserve LSC's integrity. This sanction requires approval from the Board of Directors.

Additional Notes:

- **Combination of Sanctions:** Sanctions are not mutually exclusive and may be combined if deemed appropriate.
- **Severity-Based Decision-Making:** The choice of sanction is based on the seriousness of the complaint and consideration of past sanctions in similar situations.
- **Conditional Sanctions:** Probation and suspension require the member to meet outlined conditions before the sanction is lifted, as detailed in the Notification of Sanctions letter.

APPEALS

12. Members have the right to appeal a decision made by the review committee at the Branch level.

13. Formation of Appeals Committee:

- The Chair appoints an Appeals Committee consisting of three individuals who were not involved in the initial review.
- Members of the committee may include a Board of Directors member; Branch Past President; Branch Committee Chair; National Trainer; or an individual external to the Society's operations, with an understanding of its aims, structure, awards, and procedures.
- The Chair serves as a non-voting member of the Appeals Committee.

14. Scope of the Appeal:

- The Appeals Committee evaluates whether the recommendations from the Review Committee and/or the CEO's decisions were reasonable.

15. Final Decision:

- The Appeals Committee's decision to uphold, alter, or rescind the sanction is final and binding.

16. Appeal to the Lifesaving Society Canada (LSC)

- If unsatisfied with the resolution at the Branch level, the member may escalate their appeal to LSC. The option to appeal to LSC only applies to National Mandatory or Endorsed programs and Code of Conduct issues.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing to the LSC CEO within **10 business days** of receiving the Branch-level appeal decision.
- The LSC CEO will evaluate if the appeal meets the threshold for consideration as per the current National Appeals Policy and SOP.
- If the appeal threshold is met, the LSC CEO will implement the National Appeal SOP.

17. The Certification Review Process is considered complete when:

- **No Appeal is Requested:** The Chair has informed the member of the decision, and the member has not requested an appeal within the specified timeframe.
- **Appeal Outcome is Finalized:** The Appeals Committee has communicated its decision to the member, whether the appeal was allowed, denied, or modified.